

Second Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday

My Lord and My God

April 3, 2016 Cathedral of Saint Paul

Readings: Acts 5:12-16; Revelation 1:9-13, 17-19; John 20:19-31

Today we complete the Easter Octave, that period of one full week in which liturgically speaking, it is Easter each and every day. Morning and Evening Prayer are prayed directly from the Easter solemnity itself; if once is good, eight times is better, so that its importance impresses itself in our minds and hearts.

Today, though, we see how quickly things can change, as Thomas expresses his doubt. It is also Divine Mercy Sunday, and its image placed in the sanctuary bears the inscription, “Jesus, I trust in you” at the bottom, in accordance with the private revelations given to St. Faustina in the 1930’s in Poland.

The mystery of Easter is beyond our limited capacity to fully comprehend. This is where trust comes in. Trust in Jesus and in His chosen instrument, the Church, create no conflict for the person who uses the God given gift of his intellect. There is clearly a crisis of trust in our world today, reflecting a whole range of situations, by no means limited to mistrust in the Church or of God. Fewer people trust Congress, fewer teenagers trust their parents, and fewer adults trust their bosses at work. In some cities, trust in law enforcement is severely damaged. What does this mean for us?

The lack of trust is closely related to an almost universal sense in which lying has become so commonplace. The Catechism is quite clear about lying and other offenses against the Truth. “A *lie* consists in speaking a falsehood with the intention of deceiving.”¹ In the first edition of the Catechism, several words were added to the end of that definition, namely one “*who has the right to know the truth.*”

¹ St. Augustine, *De mendacio* 4,5

[When the official Latin text came out it was the shorter definition, more closely echoing the text in the writings of Saint Augustine. This does not indicate that the original formulation was wrong, though perhaps the editors of the *Catechism* were not prepared to endorse it in an official Catholic reference work. It could tend to become quite subjective. Most moralists would have no problem with telling an untruth in order to protect innocent people from a crime, for the Nazi's had no right to know the whereabouts of the Jewish store owner.]

Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord.² The *gravity of a lie* is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims.³ If it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity, a lie could be considered a mortal sin. To be sure, trust is utterly broken.

I am not speaking here of the person who says the pot roast tastes just fine (when in reality it is dry) so as not to hurt another's feeling. That may well be a separate issue involving prudence, but it is still technically a lie. If we are to make progress within the context of our personal and communal relationships, we must take a hard look at issues of trust.

Our political landscape has devolved to the point where the word liar is hurled to such an extent that I wonder if it even makes an impact anymore. Have we become so numb that we no longer bat an eye if someone is called a liar? Does it even matter to us today?

² Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph # 2483

³ *Ibid.*, # 2484

As faithful Christians, we must be the witnesses of today, following in the apostolic faith handed onto us. The resurrection constitutes the confirmation of all Christ's works and teachings. We believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ as the absolute cornerstone of our Catholic faith. We trust in Jesus that his promises are true, and that indeed he is Risen, just as he said.

As witnesses, we experience the power of His resurrection by our lives of faith, by showing mercy to one another, by gratefully accepting this divine mercy in our own hearts.

The Divine Mercy of our Savior makes the fullness of life possible for all who believe. Let us re-commit ourselves to be the strongest witnesses of Easter by means of our manifest joy. Let us too cry out, "My Lord and My God," marveling that He indeed is risen and in our midst.